8:Krader & Wayne E-4 (no date) 1955 RQ2 Kazak RQ2
Kazakhstan RQ1

KN
665
647
K
648

Dates prior to 1945 were not stated in this summary of leader activities, as the primary concern was to show the overlapping functions for the period since World War II. The key dates for Kazakh Party Congresses, at which elections and nominations for Party posts were made, were: Fourth Congress, February 1949; Fifth Congress, December 1951; Sixth Congress, September 1952. Membership in the Central Committee bureau and posts in the technical apparatus are listed from the Party Congress at which election or appointment was made through the year in which, in the current Congress, the appointment or election was not repeated, unless evidence is available that the individual has been purged or transferred somewhere along the line.

KAZAKH PARTICIPATION IN MILITARY ACTIVITIES

KN
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648

Several infantry divisions were organized on Kazakh territory during World War II; of these, the 238th and 316th are mentioned most prominently. Little is known with respect to their nationality composition. On the other hand, it is reported that 60 per cent of all KSSR Communist Party members had joined the Armed Forces; the Komsomol, too, supplied a large contingent.

The two divisions cited were thrown into combat in the defense of Moscow and in the battle for Tula. Their losses were staggering. The 238th Infantry Division was rewarded for heroism by being renamed the 30th Guards Division. The 316th Division, led by General Panfilov, was later designated the 8th Guards Division. In Kazakh sources it is often called the Panfilov division for its leader, who was posthumously awarded the title "Hero of the Soviet Union"; the few surviving members of the old division are reverently referred to as Panfilovtsy.[1]

Towster[2] gives pertinent information regarding the distribution of Soviet military honors awarded during the period June 1941-October 1944. The title "Hero of the Soviet Union" was awarded to 5,901 soldiers of whom 57 were Kazakhs. Three million soldiers, including 34,000 Kazakhs, received other orders and medals. The Kazakh share of these awards amounted to about one per cent—fewer than, but not too divergent from, the proportion of Kazakhs in the population of the Soviet Union.

Whether the Kazakh nationals in the Red Army had experiences which were radically different from those of their Russian comrades-in-arms cannot be determined with certainty. As one would expect, available Soviet sources provide no indication that Kazakhs were treated as inferiors. The other avenue of information, German documents captured by the United States Army, provides a totally different picture.

Descriptions of interrogations of prisoners of war of Turkestan origin conducted by German investigators appear occasionally within several bulky files held by the Defense Department Records Branch in

[1] That few seem to have survived is illustrated by the fact that at the celebrations of the 25th anniversary of Kazakhstan as a republic, only 28 were reported as having participated in a parade.

[2] Towster (123), 1948, p. 357.

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Alexandria.[1] These materials suffer from the German interviewers' lack of skill as well as from biases and distortions supplied by both the Germans and their prisoners. Contradictions are frequent. The soldiers interviewed were defectors or deserters, and this factor must be kept in mind. Nevertheless, these men provide the only information available on service conditions, and certainly some of their reports may be taken seriously.

Almost every man interviewed voiced the opinion that minorities were treated badly in mixed units, especially in those units where Russian officers and noncommissioned officers predominated. Mutual distrust prevailed in such units; minority nationals were kept under surveillance because it was feared that they might desert. Morale among those nationals was low, especially when mail from home arrived announcing unfair or brutal treatment of the soldiers' families (requisitions, inhuman work loads, and so forth). The consensus of opinion among prisoners who belonged to several different units gives some credence to such reports. Further corroboration is supplied by some Russian soldiers interviewed at the same time. These men spoke of their Central Asian comrades as "poor soldiers" and "illiterates."

Some units formed in Central Asia had been organized rather hurriedly and shipped out with little or no training. It is small wonder, then, that such outfits did not resist German pressure effectively. When they asked about the reason for desertion, the German interrogators elicited most frequently the response that the man in question did not want to fight for the Russians. Nobody admitted fear as a direct motivating factor; a few volunteered the additional information that they resented fighting for a regime which had forced the free nomads into collectives.[2] According to interrogators' comments, virtually all Kazakh PW's spoke little or no Russian. German propaganda achieved a measure of success only after it began using the minority languages.

The racial doctrine of the Nazis tended to reinforce unfavorable comparisons made between the German and the Turkic soldiers, and almost barred the way to mutual understanding. Nevertheless, with the advice of civilian experts and officers who had lived in Turkestan and spoke the languages of the volunteers, the Germans managed to create the militarily satisfactory 162nd Infantry Division composed of Turkic nationals. This division stayed in the Italian campaign to the end of the war. It was forced to retreat hastily under pressure on several occasions, yet the German-Turkic solidarity was so high that desertions to the Allied side were often remarkably low, and no case was reported of Asiatic soldiers killing any of the German cadre although conditions were favorable for such action.

[1] Only a preliminary survey of these materials was made in connection with this study. Although useful information was obtained, it soon became evident that full exploitation of the captured German records for this purpose would far exceed the limitations of time and money established for the present research.

[2] Three Kazakh deserters said that they decided to bolt when they found a German propaganda leaflet telling them (in their native language) that there were no kolkhozes in Germany (October 1942).